

WAVE 5 Aug 1971



GOVERNOR RIDES TRAIN— Governor Calvin Rampton was a guest of the Wasatch Mountain Railway Company on Friday for "Governor's Day" on the Heber Creeper. He joined

other influential Utah officials and citizens for a ride down Provo Canyon to Bridal Veil Falls. Wasatch Co. Attorney Jim Smedley is pictured with Utah's chief executive.

Utah's Governor Rides Famous "Heber Creeper"

Gov. Calvin L. Rampton briefly returned to the days of railroading's golden age Friday as he rode through Provo Canyon aboard the "Heber Creeper."

It was reminiscent of the early 1900's as old engine Number 35 pulled the four cars of visiting dignitaries along the route once vital to the economic and livestock development of Utah.

THE GOVERNOR, CLAD in a railroader's striped hat and blue scarf, was joined by about 80 others for the "Governor's Day" ride from Heber City to Bridal Veil Falls and return.

Conductor Paul Keefer signaled the old locomotive to pull out of the Heber City depot to begin the governor's first ride on the historic train. The old engine steamed through Heber Valley over tracks that once helped make the town one of the west's largest sheep shipping centers.

ITS WHISTLE BLOWING, the old train rumbled and bumped into wooded Provo Canyon towards the falls 18 miles below Heber City.

The Wasatch Mountain Railway train appeared to capture the imagination of the young aboard and rekindle memories of the oldsters as it wound down the majestic canyon.

(Continued on Back Page)

Thursday, August 5, 1971





A TRAIN RIDE WITH THE GOVERNOR—Utah's Governor Calvin Rampton enjoyed his ride on the famed "Heber Creeper". He was presented with a key to Heber City by Mayor Harry C. McMillan in a ceremony on the train. Other dignitaries pictured are Salt Lake County Commissioners: Garn and Harrison. Train passengers were serenaded by musicians Don Hoggan and Harvey Murdock during the ride down Provo Canyon and back to Heber City.

Wasatch Co. Fair Schedule for Train

THURS.-FRIDAY Departure
10:00 A. M. - 3:00 P. M.

(Continued From Front Page)

As the crew played guitars and mandolins, and hostesses sang, the governor and hostesses JaLynn Rasmussen danced to a railroad tune in the club

car. The passengers joined the singing, clapping hands to the music as the crew sang ballads.

LOWE ASHTON, COMPANY president, said the trip was to show the governor the results of what area residents have done to restore the old railway and to thank him for the opportunity to try the venture.

Gov. Rampton said he was delighted with the ride, but was even more delighted that the tourist attraction appears to be a financial success.

Mr. Ashton said the train has been operating at its 250-passenger capacity the past several days and drawing more tourists into the Heber area than expected. The train's initial run was July 10th.

7 Aug 1971



Tourist Center Is Having Busiest Year

This caboose, which serves as tourist information site in Brigham City, is drawing record number of travelers. Visitors from every state and several foreign nations have stopped to ask questions. Deborah Baugh, left, and Christena Yates, answer inquiries from Mr. and Mrs. Jim Rose, visitors from St. Albans, W.Va.

10 Aug 1971

Canyon Road Spiked

Utah Department of Highway planning for a second road cut through Provo Canyon was halted Monday by Gov. Calvin L. Rampton.

Rampton sent a letter to Utah State Road Commission members which stated that public opinion was so against a new cut for a two-lane highway, with space for two more lanes to be added later, that all planning on the highway should be re-evaluated.

The letter said, in part: "In light of apparent public hostility to construction in the canyon, I wish to request that the entire project be re-evaluated

and additional public hearings held."

Conservation groups and others claim that the project to widen the highway would substantially damage the river and its banks and diminish the beauty of the canyon.

Several university professors compared "what could happen in Provo Canyon to extensive stream channelization and high road cuts made in Weber and other canyons."

The governor asked road commission members to take "a new look" at the project in their next meeting Friday in Logan. He also requested that

they complete an ecological study before continuation of planning.

UHD officials earlier said they had planned to hear an evaluation report from the Highway-Environment Steering Committee at their next meeting.

Rampton cited a public opinion poll taken in Utah County which showed that only six percent of those polled favored the highway department proposal for a new road, in addition to the present one, through Provo Canyon.

Forty-five percent favored only a widening and straight-

ening of the existing road, and 15 percent favored no new construction at all.

Rampton said that while he was not overlooking the extensive planning which had gone into the proposed new canyon road, nor the expertise of engineers "the general concept of a road should be such as to meet public approval, particularly approval of those residing in the immediate vicinity where, as here, the road does not form an essential link in a transcontinental route."

A public opinion poll conducted last winter by Orem High School indicated a large

majority against making a second road cut through the canyon. A graduate student economic study at Brigham Young University last spring concluded there was "low justification" for continuing plans for a new Provo Canyon road.

While controversy over the road reached emotional intensity last winter, the project has been held up this summer to enable highway engineers to draw up an environmental impact report required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

DESERET NEWS

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Tuesday, August 10, 1971

B 1

12 Aug 1971



REWARD— Miss Carol Ritchie, an employee of the Wasatch Mt. Railway receives \$25.00 cash award from Travel Utah, Inc., representatives Gene Gardner and Matt Wallis.

Travel Incentive Award Given to Creeper Employee

The first of a number of cash awards to be presented to employees of service establishments in Heber, who go out of their way to sell Utah and to be of service to a visiting tourist was today awarded to Carol Ritchie, an employee of the Wasatch Mountain Railway.

RONALD E. McMILLIN, Executive Vice President and General Manager of Travel Utah, Inc., a statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to making tourism Utah's number one industry, announced that in an effort to create employee awareness on the part of those serving the travel industry, cash awards will be presented by Travel Utah, Inc., during

this year's tourist season to deserving employees throughout the state. Designated tourists or Travel Utah representatives will act as Mystery Men or distributors of the Travel Utah cash awards, and have been instructed to present the cash awards on the spot to an employee who does a particularly good job of serving the traveler.

CAROL, WHO AS A hostess on the Heber Creeper, not only makes sure that passengers are comfortable, but also through

explanations of the area and spending time with each passenger make their trip very pleasant and enjoyable, received a \$25 cash award from Matt S. Wallis, Marketing Director of Travel Utah Inc.

Lowe Ashton, President of the Wasatch Mountain Railway, said that Carol has been a great asset to the Creeper and her charming manner has made many friends for Utah and the Heber Valley.

Travel Utah, Inc., hopes to promote, through such employee awareness programs, an understanding of the need to develop Utah's tourist industry to provide jobs and strengthen our state's tax base. Employees of service establishments who meet the tourist eyeball to eyeball must learn how to sell Utah and how to be a good host.

A family party was held on the lawn of Garth Rasband August 2nd. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Heber Rasband, his sister, Jean Ritchie who also had a birthday on August 1st as did Garth; Kay Ritchie and children and the Marvis Bonds. enjoyed a tasty lunch and visiting as they honored Garth and Jean.

Bill McNaughton, his wife and family, who have spent some time here at the Jay McNaughton home left last week for Langely Air Base in Virginia where he will be stationed.

Letter to Editor

Canyon Citizens Group Lauds Governor For Asking Road Evaluation

The Provo Canyon Citizen's Committee was pleased to hear of Governor Rampton's action to have the Utah Highway Department reevaluate the proposed highway through Provo Canyon. We appreciate the governor taking the time the first week in May to meet with our committee and were pleased he took the appropriate action to investigate the situation after hearing all viewpoints. We also appreciate the work of many organizations and individuals, too many to mention all, who brought the facts of this matter to the governor's attention.

The Citizen's Committee agrees with the delay, which gives the Highway Department the opportunity to develop alternative plans which will be more compatible with the beauty of the canyon and its unique ecology, recognized by both resident and tourist alike, according to the letter from the governor to the Highway Commission.

Present Road

We feel that increased safety and convenience can be obtained by improving the present road rather than making a second cut through the canyon. We also feel that construction on the improved road should begin as soon as possible.

Now is the time to proceed with the development of a comprehensive master plan of the canyon, which will include more than just the highway needs, such as the sewer line,

park development, zoning and sign control. The Provo Canyon Citizens Committee stands ready to help in anyway possible to plan for the best highway through the canyon at the same time protecting the beauty for the use of ours and future generations.

Provo Canyon Citizens
Committee
By Lowell Christensen

The following personal statement on the canyon road was telephoned to the Herald from New York in behalf of actor Robert Redford, member of the canyon citizens committee.

I can't tell you how pleased I am over the governor's concern to comply with the wishes of the majority of the residents of Utah County. I also laud his patience in waiting until all views had been aired, pros and cons, and intelligently auditing and results of numerous polls taken by citizens and official research groups...

Protect Environment

"Governor Rampton cannot be congratulated strongly enough for making such a step toward protecting Utah environment. Despite the worldwide concern for ecology, there is still an unbelievable amount of needless destruction of our natural environment, and the governor's action is bound to set an example which should make every Utahn proud. I hope that everyone who has been championing the preservation of Provo Canyon will not let their interests lag now and that they

will take the time to write or send a telegram to Governor Rampton expressing their appreciation.

"I feel there is a need for improving the road through the canyon, but feel this can take place with a minimum amount of destruction, visually and materially."

Mr. Redford has just returned to New York following a brief visit at Sundance with New York Mayor John V. Lindsay during the latter's short vacation in Utah.

Summer Job is Fun For

Girls on 'Heber Creeper'

By CONNIE HANSEN
Heber Herald 13 Aug 1977

Summer employment is usually categorized as a "job" which needs to be done, but once in a while it's "enjoyment". Describing their summer employment as such are Ja Lynn Rasmussen and Teresa Ellertson, who are currently serving as stewardesses on the "Heber Creeper Scenic Train" operated by the Wasatch Mountain Railway Company.

The girls are two of seven attractive teen-agers who accompany the train throughout its journey through Wasatch County into wooded Provo Canyon daily. Their duties vary as they serve refreshments, answer questions, entertain with other minstrels and generally stay in contact with the passengers.

Both girls concur that this summer has been a delightful experience.

Ja Lynn Rasmussen is a B.Y.U. coed, studying speech, drama and pre-law. She is an illustrator of childrens books and a registered model. She claims she has always had a storybook life, with her summer employment on the train just being another chapter. She states, "Once you board the train it is like a fantasy. I particularly love to work as an illustrator on the train for the children as they love the train and it is fun to draw pictures as

souvenirs." Ja Lynn is producer of the Pioneer Playhouse in Heber City, so between her two loves, her summer has been very full indeed.

Teresa Ellertson just graduated from Wasatch High School and has been involved in numerous activities. She states that this summer has opened the door to many new and exciting adventures. Meeting new people, and enjoying the scenic train ride with them had added extra dimension to her summer. She enjoys her opportunity to sing aboard the train as entertainment has been one of her special hobbies. She is a member of "The Living Room Rug" singing group and she has also spent her summer appearing in reproductions of the Pioneer Playhouse.

Summing up this summer both girls agree that the people that come into Heber Valley are interesting people that are looking for good clean entertainment. They feel it is very rewarding to be a part of that.



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tertaining on the scenic train. Girls also answer questions, serve refreshments and make passengers comfortable.

Highway Board Replies On Canyon Road Issue

(Special to the Herald)

LOGAN — The Utah State Road Commission, meeting today in Logan, answered Gov. Calvin L. Rampton's recent request that Provo Canyon highway planning be suspended pending receipt of an environmental report, and that afterward the project be re-evaluated and additional public hearings held.

Adopting unanimously a letter written by its chairman, Clem Church, the road board noted that detailed planning is currently curtailed during preparation of an environmental impact report and that the commission intends to re-evaluate the project and hold additional hearings after the study is completed.

Utah County's representative on the commission, Wayne Winters, moved that ... "should there be widespread opposition by a majority of the citizens of Utah to the design improvements then considered essential by the commission, that the project in Provo Canyon

should be abandoned. money now programmed for the Provo Canyon be sent to other needed projects.

The letter by Commissioner Church stated: "When various studies now underway have been completed, they, along with the environmental impact study results, will be reviewed by the commission with adequate opportunity for public participation." He promised that the commission would discuss the results with public officials, civic groups, and the general public through public hearings.

Much of the letter reviewed the history of the commission's involvement with the Provo Canyon highway. The full text follows:

"Dear Governor Rampton: "Planning for an improved transportation link through Provo Canyon has been a matter of importance to the road commission for several years. Within the past two years detailed plans have been

"Before the first stage could be started, federal requirements calling for an environmental impact report became effective. This requirement not only involved programming in Provo Canyon, but in addition all other federally-financed projects which had not received final design approval.

"Following this action, the Highway Commission was instructed to prepare the plans for the initial construction. Since funds are not adequate to finance the entire canyon at time, the plan has called for stage construction which will be extended over a several-year period.

Funding the project is now programmed for the construction from the canyon to the north end of the canyon.

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"The commission has programmed the Provo Canyon improvements with full consideration of the various factors involved, and will not program other improvements in Provo Canyon, or in any other area of the state, in excess of present or future needs for such facilities.

Standard of Road

"We realize that one area of disagreement has been the need for the standard of improvement decided upon. Many years of study and evaluation through the comprehensive planning processes have in our mind demonstrated that this route forms an important link in both the state and national transportation systems. Recent traffic studies do substantiate this in that the percentage of traffic is interregional and interstate and does link and serve with two major intercontinental routes. This facet of the problem is one that we would appreciate very much the opportunity to discuss with you in more detail.

"As was indicated to you in my letter of Aug. 10, 1971, the Road Commission will review this in full depth as we get together this week."

Adequate Report

Commissioner Wayne Winters of Utah County, after hearing Commissioner Church's letter, stated: "The letter you have read along with your comments adequately explains the status of the Provo Canyon road project and the commission's future plans for that project. As you indicate, the detailed design activities on the project were curtailed some time back when the environmental impact study was initiated.

"When that study is complete, the commission will re-evaluate the project and whatever additional facts the study provides. The letter points out that the Provo Canyon road serves as a major traffic artery not only for locally-oriented traffic, but also for through traffic traveling through to points beyond the canyon."

Winters' Motion

He further stated: "I move that the letter read by the chairman be sent as the commission's response to the governor's letter concerning Provo Canyon. I further move that after all the facts of the project have been re-evaluated and presented to the public, should there be widespread opposition by a majority of the citizens of Utah to the design

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"Dear Governor Rampton: "Planning for an improved transportation link through Provo Canyon has been a matter of importance to the road commission for several years. Within the past two years detailed plans have been

developed, public hearings held and monies programmed for the first phase of construction from the mouth of the canyon to Nunn's.

"In order to preserve the
(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued From Page 1)

canyon bottom, including the river and much of the present highway, which provided access to the various interests in the canyon as well as providing for increased road capacity over the next 20-year period without again causing major disruption in the canyon, a new alignment was studied and accepted by the commission.

Funding Problem

"Following this commission action, the Highway Department was instructed to proceed with the plans for the initial phase of the construction. Since primary funds are not adequate to finance the entire canyon at one time, the plan has called for stage construction which will be extended over a several-year period.

"Before the first stage could be started, federal requirements calling for an environmental impact report became effective. This requirement not only involved programming in Provo Canyon, but in addition all other federally-financed projects which had not received final design approval.

"The present status of the Provo Canyon project is somewhat static while awaiting completion of the environmental impact study. The study is now under way and will require several more weeks for completion. The delay in construction due to the need to make the environmental study was reported by letter of April 7, 1971, to the various officials of the five-county area most closely associated with the canyon. The same letter was published in newspapers with local and statewide circulation at the same time so the public at large could know of the delay.

Hearings Planned

"It has been the commission's plan since this study began to not only review the results but to release those results through public meetings with public officials, civic groups, and public hearings. Following such meetings and review, it is only logical that the commission should make a re-evaluation of the Provo Canyon project before moving to construction.

"There has been some controversy during the planning stages of this project but that controversy has not brought more public pressure on the road commission to abandon the concept of major improvements on the canyon road system than have other similarly-important road projects.

Work Curtailed

"Certain engineering studies to fully evaluate all suggested alternates are still being carried out in the canyon, even though major design activities have been curtailed during the course

of the environmental impact study. When the various studies now underway have been completed they, along with the environmental impact study results, will be reviewed by the commission with adequate opportunity for public participation.

"The commission has programmed the Provo Canyon improvements with full consideration of the various factors involved, and will not program other improvements in Provo Canyon, or in any other area of the state, in excess of present or future needs for such facilities.

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Summer Job is Fun For Girls on 'Heber Creeper'

Herald 13 Aug 1971
By CONNIE HANSEN

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The girls are two of seven attractive teen-agers who accompany the train throughout its journey through Wasatch County into wooded Provo Canyon daily. Their duties vary as they serve refreshments, answer questions, entertain with other minstrels and generally stay in contact with the passengers.

Both girls concur that this summer has been a delightful experience.

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Teressa Ellertson just graduated from Wasatch High School and has been involved in numerous activities. She states that this summer has opened the door to many new and exciting adventures. Meeting new people, and enjoying the scenic train ride with them had added extra dimension to her summer. She enjoys her opportunity to sing aboard the train as entertainment has been one of her special hobbies. She is a member of "The Living Room Rug" singing group and she has also spent her summer appearing in reproductions of the Pioneer Playhouse.

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15 Aug 1971 Herald

Provo Canyon Train Ride Thrills Senior Citizens

Provo Senior Citizens are still thrilled with last week's special feature which was a train ride through Provo Canyon, the first such experience in many years for most of them.

They are anticipating the next tour which comes Wednesday of this week and will be a trip to the Sundance Recreation Center in Provo Canyon. Buses will leave the Eldred Center at 5:30 p.m. for Sundance where the group will have dinner in the Branch Room Dining Hall.

The menu from which the group will make its dinner selections will include typical Western foods such as Deer Burgers, Rifle Man, Buntler Special and Colt .45 selections.

The dinner will be followed by the musical production, "Porter Rockwell", featuring Patrick Mativia, who will perform in the role of Porter Rockwell, personal body guard for Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and well-known pioneer frontiersman.

Special guests for the Sundance tour will be Nora Begay, 22 year old Indian student at Brigham Young University, who was recently selected Miss Indian America; and her party including her escort, Bob Nakai, her mother and chaperon, Jackie Mott.

Coming events for Senior Citizens include: "Stop the

World, I Want to Get Off," a Broadway Musical Production at Lagoon, Thursday, Aug. 26; and "Antelope Island Tour," Friday, September 3.

Wednesday

1 p.m. — Harmonica Band Concert and Matinee dancing, Eldred Center Ball Room.

2 p.m. — Travelogue: Films and Features.

3 p.m. — Square Dancing with Earl A. Beck, veteran caller and instructor.

5:30 p.m. — Buses leave for Sundance dinner and musical production, "Porter Rockwell."

Thursday

4 p.m. — Senior Citizen bowling at the Regal Lanes.

Monday

4 p.m. — Bowling at the Regal Lanes.

Tuesday

8 p.m. — Senior Citizen dancing group. Eldred Center Ball Room.

Fewer Wells

TULSA, Okla. (UPI)—There were 35 fewer oil and gas wells drilled in the United States during the first half of 1971 than in the corresponding period of 1970.

American wells totaled 996 on July 1, 1970, and 961 at the same time this year. Canadian well numbers were down from 108 last year to 89 in the same period of 1971.



A RIDE ON THE IRON HORSE on Thursday afternoon was the reward for these boys, members of the Provo City Little League championship team, Norge Village. With them are Tom Giles, right, and Val Neuen-swander and Phil Alson at the left, coaches. After the trip on the Heber Creeper from

Heber City to Bridal Veil Falls and back, the group went to the Giles cabin in South Fork for corn on the cob, hamburgers, etc. The boys' families were also invited to the Giles cabin. Central Real Estate treated the boys to the train ride.

Tribune 15 Aug 1971

HEBER CREEPER
W.M.R.

**STEAM
EXCURSION
RAILROAD**

ROUND TRIP FARES
\$3.50 Adults
\$1.75 Children

(38 Miles)
HEBER CITY TO
BRIDAL VEIL
FALLS AND
RETURN

CALL (1) 654-2621

FRI., SAT., & SUN. 11 and 3:30
MON., WED., THUR. 1:30 (closed Tues)

Herald 15 Aug 1971

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Business Portrait: Lowe Ashton

Things Just Creep Along—Get Better All the Time

The devotees of steam railroading have long existed on a motive power of pure nostalgia; there was nothing of economics in their love, and only the shining vision of the Denver and Rio Grande's profitable summer run on narrow gauge from Durango to Silverton kept the dreamers dreaming.

"The cult of antiquity and obsolescence for their own sake is not an entirely vital one," admitted Lucius Beebe, whose whole gaudy life was a tribute to that cult, "but there are sensibilities which recoil from the meretricious fraudulences of airflow design and the sullen secrecies of diesel-electric power."

It was the black naked power of hot iron that Beebe loved; his railroading books are studded with photo captions like "A Study in Texas and Pacific Power," and "Archetype of Pennsy Power in Tandem." A photo of an old Pacific steamer at the head of the Sante Fe's all-diesel El Capitan, giving it a leg up on the 2.2 percent grade east of Cajon Pass, sent him into ecstasies of smugness.

More to It

But there was more to it than that. Beebe had a real sense of that which was glorious in American history, and the "brave canary yellow coaches" of the Virginia & Truckee stood for him as "reminders still of heroic times in the land . . . one with placer diggings and the Jingle Bob . . .



Lowe Ashton, man behind the Heber Creeper, says he's a businessman, not a rail buff.

"I have hoped," he wrote modestly, "to preserve a little of them for the record."

Beebe, one imagines, would have appreciated Lowe Ash-

The D&RGW abandoned the line a few years back because it wasn't paying its way. Mr. Ashton put together a team of 16 investors, with a lot of his own money for seed, and went to work.

Rusting Grandeur

The equipment was available, in museums, on the Garfield & Western's old tracks, even at the State Fairgrounds, where sat No. 618, in rusting grandeur. "There was an awful lot of work donated," says Mr. Ashton. The interest of railroad buffs was one with the needs of the Heber community and the financial common sense of Mr. Ashton's partners, who "didn't do it out of sheer love of railroading."

There was a slight setback last January when 618, running behind a snowplow went off the tracks. But the Heber Creeper began its daily runs about a month ago, and has been at near capacity since. Through last weekend it had hauled 12,932 passengers and taken in \$36,419.46, which means, says Mr. Ashton, that "revenue is far exceeding our costs right now."

ton. For Mr. Ashton, the driving spirit behind the reborn Heber Creeper, is in it for the money, a motive that the man who admired the robber barons of California and the brigands of Virginia City would have understood.

Runs on Rebuilt

Mr. Ashton's outfit, the Wasatch Mountain Railway and Development Co., is now running a load of passenger cars — some covered, some open to the skies, but none en-

closed — down the gentle grade from Heber to Bridal Veil Falls and back again, every day and twice on weekends. And the glory of it is that at the head is a rebuilt Mikado 2-8-2.

"We backed into this because we got fighting the Road Commission on what to do with Provo Canyon. It started out as a civic effort to preserve what to our community was a natural asset, the railroad from Heber to Provo."

More Pleasant

But Mr. Ashton contends that the Creeper's potential far exceeds the Silverton's. The novelty of the narrow gauge will pale before the size and power of full-size steam railroading, he says; passengers will find the Creeper's oil-burners — the Consolidated, No 618, is now being converted — more pleasant to

The future never looked brighter for this hunk of the past.

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He sees the Creeper as a successful part of a huge Wasatch County recreation area, which it enhances and to which it provides access — a year-round proposition, when sidings are finished alongside Deer Creek Reservoir and if the skiing potential of the Wasatch Forest is ever developed.

Mr. Ashton envisions regular dining car service, and soon. He draws a romantic picture of a plush diner parked by the shore of a gleaming icy lake in midwinter, the moonlight cascading down to illuminate prospect and provender alike.

More Available

It can be done. Success generates momentum, as well as capital. The rolling stock is available, and cheap: fully equipped dining cars are going for under \$10,000 in Omaha, and as AMTRAK forces our more smaller lines, creates more mergers, more

cars will come onto the market.

It's not just the railroading buffs up there behind the Mikado. It's old-timers and parents and their children, and though the parents say it's for the kids, Mr. Ashton doesn't really believe them. The old-timers grumble about the stewardesses, but they'll ride anyway, and Mr. Ashton is after the excursion dollar: if dinner cruises on the Great Salt Lake will sell, why not dinner cruises on rail through Provo Canyon?

And He Loves It

The man behind it all is a 41-year-old gentile who lives among Mormons and loves it, a Rotarian with a shaved head. He's hung his hat at Stanford and Denver universities, and stayed long enough at Utah to earn a marketing degree.

He made his money selling gas: he's Continental Oil jobber for eastern Utah, and he's got the Hub truck stop south of Heber. There's a motel in the Ashton properties, too.

But right now he's into the railroad — that, and as a concomitant, keeping the road builders out of the canyon.

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Doug Harwood

Salt Lake City, Utah

Business Portrait: Lowe Ashton

Things Just Creep Along—Get Better All the Time

The devotees of steam railroading have long existed on a motive power of pure nostalgia; there was nothing of economics in their love, and only the shining vision of the Denver and Rio Grande's profitable summer run on narrow gauge from Durango to Silverton kept the dreamers dreaming.

"The cult of antiquity and obsolescence for their own sake is not an entirely vital one," admitted Lucius Beebe, whose whole gaudy life was a tribute to that cult, "but there are sensibilities which recoil from the meretricious fraudulences of airflow design and the sullen secrecies of diesel-electric power."

It was the black naked power of hot iron that Beebe loved; his railroading books are studded with photo captions like "A Study in Texas and Pacific Power," and "Archetype of Pennsy Power in Tandem." A photo of an old Pacific steamer at the head of the Sante Fe's all-diesel El Capitan, giving it a leg up on the 2.2 percent grade east of Cajon Pass, sent him into ecstasies of smugness.

More to It

But there was more to it than that. Beebe had a real sense of that which was glorious in American history, and the "brave canary yellow coaches" of the Virginia & Truckee stood for him as "reminders still of heroic times in the land . . . one with placer diggings and the Jingle Bob . . .



Lowe Ashton, man behind the Heber Creeper, says he's a businessman, not a rail buff.

"I have hoped," he wrote modestly, "to preserve a little of them for the record."

Beebe, one imagines, would have appreciated Lowe Ash-

The D&RGW abandoned the line a few years back because it wasn't paying its way. Mr. Ashton put together a team of 16 investors, with a lot of his own money for seed, and went to work.

Rusting Grandeur

The equipment was available, in museums, on the Garfield & Western's old tracks, even at the State Fairgrounds, where sat No. 618, in rusting grandeur. "There was an awful lot of work donated," says Mr. Ashton. The interest of railroad buffs was one with the needs of the Heber community and the financial common sense of Mr. Ashton's partners, who "didn't do it out of sheer love of railroading."

There was a slight setback last January when 618, running behind a snowplow went off the tracks. But the Heber Creeper began its daily runs about a month ago, and has been at near capacity since. Through last weekend it had hauled 12,932 passengers and taken in \$36,419.46, which means, says Mr. Ashton, that "revenue is far exceeding our costs right now."

ton. For Mr. Ashton, the driving spirit behind the reborn Heber Creeper, is in it for the money, a motive that the man who admired the robber barons of California and the brigands of Virginia City would have understood.

Runs on Rebuilt

Mr. Ashton's outfit, the Wasatch Mountain Railway and Development Co., is now running a load of passenger cars — some covered, some open to the skies, but none en-

closed — down the gentle grade from Heber to Bridal Veil Falls and back again, every day and twice on week-ends. And the glory of it is that at the head is a rebuilt Mikado 2-8-2.

"We backed into this because we got fighting the Road Commission on what to do with Provo Canyon. It started out as a civic effort to preserve what to our community was a natural asset, the railroad from Heber to Provo."

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Slides Cited In Provo Canyon Area

By HARTT WIXOM
Environmental Editor

A Brigham Young University geologist suggested today that the Utah Highway Department take advantage of current re-evaluation delays in the Provo Canyon road project to "take a more realistic look" at landslide hazards in the Wicks area.

Dr. Morris S. Petersen, associate professor of geology, said that the Wicks area "bears the earmarks of an unstable surface and . . . deserves careful thought by all disciplines to determine the probability of a catastrophe, as well as realistic maintenance costs for the proposed highway."

SLIDE DEPOSIT

The Wicks area, upon which the department has planned to construct the road, is designated as a landslide deposit on the U.S. Geological Survey map, Petersen warned.

He said the present road through the canyon floor is away from the slide area, and does not present serious landslide problems as does the proposed higher road.

One problem at Wicks is shale slowly moving down the mountainside, from a few inches to several feet per year. Steepness of the slope and ground water content may move it more rapidly, and in this area downhill movement of shale is to be expected, he added.

CITES EXAMPLE

Petersen said even when no dangerous slides occur that maintenance costs can be expected to run high, just as they do with the present road on the Manning Canyon shale area approximately one mile below Deer Creek Reservoir.

"Construction programs — with their cutting, filling, loading, and unloading of the landscape — often aggravate unstable situations which have resulted in catastrophic readjustment of the rock and soil by landslides or slumping," he added.

PUBLIC UNAWARE

Mrs. Lillian Hayes, Provo, said that she doubts the general public is aware of these geologic problems. She said many citizens in the Provo area "have written the department asking them to give more consideration to the slide hazards."

In the meantime, Gov. Calvin Rampton recently wrote the Deseret News that the major reason he interceded into the Provo Canyon project was simply because he does not consider it a national arterial linkage. "Motorists have I-70 through Salina Canyon, Weber and Parleys Canyon routes connecting national traffic east-west, and since the Provo Canyon route is primarily local, local people should have a large voice in how it is done."

URGES COOLING OFF

If this were a major arterial link, we would simply tell local people they must give way to the overall national good, Rampton said. He added, however, that there is some doubt whether improvement of the present road would preserve as much of the Provo River stream values as would a second cut.

"What the ultimate decision will be, I do not know. However, I do not like to have the highway department whipsawed between contending groups in the area of the construction," he wrote.

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Groups Inspect Provo River Road

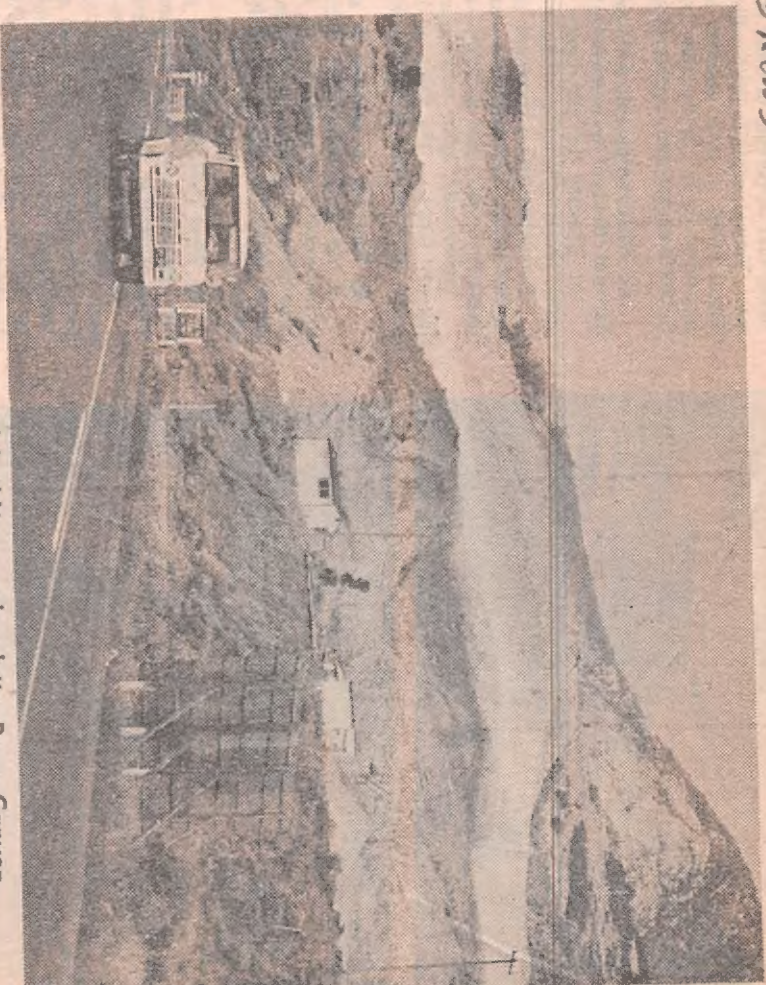
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voir. Regulations controlling "shantytown" developments in the canyon, and burial of existing power lines would benefit both the canyon and the general public, he said.

Utah Power and Light Co. officials stated earlier they would have to replace some old poles in the canyon, but that "such maintenance would be in previously cut areas, and most of it well out of sight of highway traffic."

Firmage pointed out to one tour group several large areas, particularly at the mouth of the canyon, where past road plans called for "an unnecessary removal or reclamation of a large segment of the Provo River" immediately above Murdock Reservoir. Firmage said previous cuts on the south side of the canyon, for several gravel pits, "make it a natural area for any new road cuts."

The cliff areas there could be as feasibly removed as the river could be filled, with far less environmental damage, Firmage said. "The primary concern of most everyone in the Utah County area is to



Signs, hillside scars, old buildings, poles clutter Provo Canyon.

leave natural areas, especially the Provo River, natural wherever possible."

Members of the environmental steering committee said that facts were facts, and if it were advantageous to take this route, they were certain the road commission would

fully explore it, "whatever past plans."

As for narrow spots in the canyon where the present road is only two lanes between river and cliffs, Provo architect Bruce R. Dixon said he saw no reason why it could not be left two lanes. Passing lanes, avoiding any delay longer than a few seconds, can be constructed in many wide areas, he emphasized.

Last fall it had been proposed that a new cut be made through the canyon to accommodate, in time, four more lanes through the canyon. The project was delayed in February due to a federal ruling that an environmental report be included in the road plans. Utah Gov. Calvin Rampton has said he is convinced from various opinion polls that Utahns, especially local residents, wanted an improved rather than totally new road.

"Since we have I-70, an improved Parleys route, and Weber Canyon, the Provo Canyon road cannot be considered the national linkage it once was, and local people should have a greater voice in its design," Rampton said.